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## **STATEMENT FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **What do we want the lives of children to look like?**

**CHICAGO, IL, September 17, 2012** – As we read about the case of Cristian Fernandez any number of questions arise ([huffingtonpost.com/2012/09/16/cristian-fernandez-story-case\\_n\\_1888692.html](http://huffingtonpost.com/2012/09/16/cristian-fernandez-story-case_n_1888692.html)):

How can we truly understand the story of someone's life?

How do we make sense of their personal experiences and the impacts of these experiences on their development?

And how do we build a society where children, all children, thrive, prosper, and become contributing adults?

We ask this because today we are faced with the story of Cristian Fernandez's still brief life. He is charged with committing murder and perpetrating child sexual abuse.

And he is thirteen-years old.

He was born to a teenage mother whose pregnancy resulted from a sexual assault. He was found as a two-year old wandering the streets naked and dirty. He has been sexually abused himself. He is facing life in prison.

And he is thirteen-years old.

The questions before us are not ones regarding Florida law or Supreme Court decisions. The questions may not even be about this particular story and this boy's tragic life.

The questions James M. Hmurovich, President & CEO, Prevent Child Abuse America said may be many, "How could we have prevented this from happening in the first place? Who saw what and did they report it? Which services were available to Cristian and his family and did they have access to them? And we want to know the answers to all of these questions. But ultimately, what we need to ask, is what do we as a nation, want the lives of children, all children, to look like, because we can all agree that it shouldn't look like this. Cristian is thirteen-years old and what can be done, so next time this story has a different ending?"



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### **ABOUT PREVENT CHILD ABUSE AMERICA**

Prevent Child Abuse America, founded in 1972 in Chicago, works to ensure the healthy development of children nationwide. The organization promotes that vision through a network of chapters in 49 states and 530 Healthy Families America home visitation sites in 39 states, the Mariana Islands, Puerto Rico and Canada. A major organizational focus is to advocate for the existence of a national policy framework and strategy for children and families while promoting evidence-based practices that prevent abuse and neglect from ever occurring. To learn more about what we're doing to prevent child abuse and neglect and how you can help, please visit our websites, [preventchildabuse.org](http://preventchildabuse.org) and [healthyfamiliesamerica.org](http://healthyfamiliesamerica.org).